

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CALLER

The individual who has accepted the duty of calling others to Allaah must possess certain characteristics to effectively convey the message. These attributes are mentioned in the Qur'aan and preserved in the record of the divinely guided lifestyle of the Prophet (...).

1. Knowledge

The foremost quality that the *daa'ee* (caller) should have is that of knowledge which is itself a prerequisite for faith. One must have sound knowledge of what one is inviting others to. If the Muslim missionary is ignorant, his message will appear weak and incapable of withstanding close scrutiny. This does not mean that the *daa'ee* must know all of Islaam before inviting others. However, it does mean that he should have clear knowledge of whatever limited area of Islaam he is inviting others to. Allaah, Most Great and Glorious, instructed the Prophet (...) to inform others that his call to Islaam was based on knowledge.

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ

“Say: This is my way and I invite to Allaah with certain knowledge ...”

Soorah Yoosuf, (12): 108

Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad (...) made the pursuit of knowledge an obligation on all Muslims.

2. Kindness / Gentleness

It is essential that the *daa'ee* be soft in conveying the message because harshness could easily discourage people from listening to the truth. Allaah addressed this issue with regard to the Prophet himself saying:

لَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ

“If you were harsh and hard hearted, they would have fled from around you.”

Soorah Aal 'Imraan, (3): 159

Furthermore, it was as a result of Allaah's mercy that the Prophet (...) was gentle to those he invited to Islaam.

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ

“And by the mercy of Allaah you dealt with them gently.”

Soorah Aal 'Imraan, (3): 159

The *daa'ee* must always consider the fact that Allaah instructed Prophets Moosaa and Haaron to gently communicate the message of Islaam to Pharaoh who was, at that time, claiming that he was God.

فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى

“So speak to him, both of you, mildly in order that he may reflect or fear God.”

Soorah Taa Haa, (20): 44

The Prophet (...) also prayed saying:

“O Allaah, be hard on whoever acquires control over the affairs of my nation and is hard

on them. And be kind to whoever gains control over the affairs of my nation and is kind to them.”¹

Gentleness in *da‘wah* affects the hearts of those being invited and makes them want to listen to the message. The Messenger of Allaah (...) was reported by his wife, ‘Aa’ishah to have said,

((إِنَّ الرِّفْقَ لَا يَكُونُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا زَانَهُ وَلَا يُنْزَعُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا شَانَهُ))

“Whenever gentleness is in a thing it beautifies it and whenever it is withdrawn from something it defaces.”²

And he was quoted by Jareer as saying,

((مَنْ يُحْرَمَ الرِّفْقَ يُحْرَمَ الْخَيْرَ))

“One deprived of gentleness is deprived of all good.”³

3. Wisdom

In disseminating the message of Islaam, the *daa‘ee* must adjust himself or herself to each situation and use the most appropriate material.

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ

“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom ...” *Soorah an-Nahl*, (16): 125

Some scholars of *tafseer* explain that “wisdom” mentioned in this verse refers to the Qur’aan and the *Sunnah* due to the wisdom which they contain as well as the guidance to righteousness and happiness.⁴

In reference to wisdom Sh. Ibn Baaz said:

“A part of wisdom is to clarify the meaning and explanation in effective ways. [The caller] does this in the language of the one whom he is calling so he can understand [the message]. The *daa‘ee* continues in this way until the one being called has no doubt remaining in his mind, and the truth, which may have been hidden due to a lack of explanation, or persuasive *da‘wah* in his own language ... now becomes apparent to him... If there is a need for religious admonition, then the *daa‘ee* should preach mentioning the suitable verses and *hadeeths* which concentrate on encouragement and warnings. The heart of the one called will then awaken and be attracted to the truth.”⁵

4. Patience

Most people who come to Islaam do so after a faith-seeking journey. Consequently, only a very few begin their search and end it with the same person. When declarations of faith are given it is after many stops on the road. Someone may start the person off and many help on the way and someone else helps the person finally declare their faith. Therefore, the responsibility of the *daa‘ee* is to convey the message and not to put faith in peoples hearts. As Allaah informed His Messenger (...) and his followers:

¹ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 2, p. 1016, no. 4494.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 1370, no. 6274.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 1370, nos. 6270-6271.

⁴ *Tafseer Ibn Kathir*, vol. , p.

⁵ *Words of Advice Regarding Da‘wah*, p. 66.

إِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَاغُ وَعَلَيْنَا الْحِسَابُ

“Your responsibility is only to convey [the message] and the accounting is on Me.”
(*Soorah ar-Ra’d*, 13: 40)

5. Morality

Great stress has been placed in Islaam on good moral character. Prophet Muhammad (...) summarized the essence of the Islamic message saying,

((إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ))

*“Indeed, I was only sent to complete the most noble of character traits.”*⁶

And Allaah said in the Qur’aan,

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ .

“Surely you (Muhammad) have a magnificent character.”

(*Soorah al-Qalam*, 68: 4)

The Prophet’s companion, Ibn ‘Abbaas explained that “character” here meant “religion”, i.e., Islaam.⁷ By using the term “character” to refer to the religion of Islaam, Allaah stresses the importance of morality in relationship to the religion. It was also reported that when the Prophet’s wife ‘Aa’ishah was asked about the Prophet’s character, she replied, “His character was that of the Qur’aan.”⁸ That is, his manners were according to Allaah’s instructions in the Qur’aan. Consequently, the development of good character depends on closely following the Qur’aan and the teachings of the Prophet (...). In this regard, Allaah also said in the Qur’aan:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

“Indeed you have in the Messenger of Allaah a beautiful example (of conduct)...” (*Soorah al-Ahzaab*, 33 :21)

Thus, the rites and rituals of Islaam cannot be separated from good manners. An-Nawwaas ibn Sam’aan quoted the Prophet (...) as saying,

((الْبِرُّ حُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ وَالْإِثْمُ مَا حَاكَ فِي صَدْرِكَ وَكَرِهْتَ أَنْ يَطَّلَعَ عَلَيْهِ النَّاسُ))

*“Righteousness is good character and sin is what itches in your heart and you dislike that people would find out about it.”*⁹

Islaam teaches man how to lead a morally righteous life by pointing out the proper way to live. Any Muslim who displays bad manners such as swearing or lying is either a

⁶ Narrated by Aboo Hurayrah and collected by al-Bukhaaree in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, al-Haakim and al-Bayhaquee in *Shu’ab al-Eemaan*. It has been authenticated in *Saheeh al-Jaami’ as-Sagheer*, vol.1, p.464, no.2349.

⁷ *Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-‘Atheem*, vol. 4, p. 429.

⁸ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, pp. 358-360, no. 1623, *Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 1, pp. 351-2, no. 1337 and *Ahmad*.

⁹ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, pp. 1358-9, no. 6196.

hypocrite pretending to be a Muslim or a very weak Muslim. Faith is inseparable from action. Aboo Hurayrah quoted the Prophet (...) as saying,

((أَفْضَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا)).

*“The believer whose faith is most complete is he whose character is best.”*¹⁰ Consequently, throughout the Qur’aan, whenever Allaah instructs humankind to believe, He always links faith with command to do righteous deeds. Aboo Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (...) did the same, saying, for example,

((مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلَا يُؤْذِ جَارَهُ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ)).

*“Whoever believes in Allaah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbor, he should be kind to his guest and he should either speak good or be silent.”*¹¹

That being the case, there should be an underlying principle of morality at the base of all Islamic teachings. Islaam covers all aspects of human existence; spiritual, social and economic. Consequently, there is in Islaam a network of moral principles governing all human relations with God, with other humans, as well as with the environment in which humans exist. For example, from an Islamic perspective, worshipping others besides God would be considered morally wrong and bad character, in the same way that lying to others or littering the environment would be considered morally objectionable. Therefore, it may be assumed that each of the pillars of Islaam and *Eemaan* were designed to develop a particular set of moral characteristics. Without understanding the moral and spiritual goals of the pillars, they remain empty rituals which cannot benefit anyone in the next life.

¹⁰ *Saheeh Sunan at-Tirmitheh*, vol. 1, p. 340, no. 928.

¹¹ *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 32, no.76.